

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The world is rapidly changing in all fields due to globalization and technological advancements that are causing changes in working procedures across the world. Active human resources management (HRM) practices can assist in meeting these challenges, which can be an integral function and a significant activity towards an organization's success. Therefore, the implementation of HRM practices to strengthen an organization may be tricky but an essential venture (Cerasoli, Alliger, Donsbach, Mathieu, Tannenbaum, & Orvis, (2018), Alameeri, Alshurideh, Al Kurdi, & Salloum, (2020). Alnaqbi (2011) pointed "As economic globalization has become more pronounced, the ability of organisations to compete in the global marketplace is all the more tied to the quality of their Human Resources. Many organizations rely on the expertise of their employees to gain competitive advantage in Global Economies". Al-Dhuhouri, Alshurideh, Al Kurdi, & Salloum (2020) added that in this economic environment, retaining valuable employees becomes an essential strategy for human resources managers and organizational leaders. Thus, it is a global norm that a creative and innovative workforce plays a pivotal role in the growth and success of an organization, whether profit or non-profit organizations. Knowledge is power; therefore, knowledgeable employees employ their analytical and theoretical skills and knowledge to perform extraordinarily in their organization. Innovative employees also always work

in a team, with high organizational commitment and less absenteeism (Islam, Talat, Ungku Norulkamar Ungku Bt Ahmad, & Ishfaq Ahmed, 2013).

Organizations face a significant challenge in the complexity of Human Resources Management and the difficulty of competing with the possibility of an employee and continuing his survival amid the global variables and the impact of globalization on most business sectors characterized by the ongoing dynamic of change for the better services and products. Because of the competition strength at levels locally, regionally and globally, the only way to continue with the various competing organizations is to develop Human Resource Management, which is the resolution of each organization and is considered one of the essential ingredients for the success of any organization. The success of any organization depends on the strength of its human resources, which is regarded as a milestone in achieving a high level of performance and production. The organization's success largely depends on all the employees' participation in strategic decisions affecting the present scenario and its future (Alnaqbi, 2011).

Organizations can be Public or Private, but employees are considered the most Valuable Resource. To be able to compete among other reliable organizations, achieve its ultimate goals and survive in this era, any organization should have the right personnel at the appropriate place and at the proper time (Aguenza, & Som, (2018); Bianchi, Casmici, & Squazzoni, (2016). Every organization depends mainly on the quality and competence of its employees. Therefore, organizations have to pay more attention to their human resources because the implementation of Human Resource practices supports maximizing employees' competencies in the organization (Anitha, (2016); Aguenza, & Som, (2018); Saleem and Khurshid, (2014). Human Resource Management practices can create organisations characterized by intelligence, flexibility

and competence compared to their rivals. These organizations apply policies and procedures for recruiting, selecting and training skilled employees. These employees, in return, will direct their best efforts towards cooperation within the resource bundle of their organization (Birtch, Chiang, & Van Esch, 2016). Butterick, and Charlwood (2021) emphasized that the human resource function brings in the strategic value of people in organizations by contributing to value added and competitive advantage. The organization relies on human resources as its employees. Effective human resource strategy systematically organizes all individual human resources, which measures to directly influence employee attitude and behaviour in such a way that leads the business to achieve its competitive strategy (Camuffo, & De Stefano, (2019); Cross, & Swart, (2020a); Cross, & Swart, 2020b). Theorists and empirical researchers have proclaimed whether human resource practices affect employer satisfaction.

Human Resource Management practices impact many aspects of the workplace and can explain the difference between the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. These HR practices influence how employees work, feel, and behave. Accordingly, they affect job satisfaction and organizational performance (Duggan, Sherman, Carbery, & McDonnell, 2020; Dundon, & Rafferty, 2018; Fleming, 2017; Harney, & Collings, 2021). As previously highlighted, the core function of HRM practices is to hire righteous people for the right job so that the required output can be achieved by completing the work at proper motivational packages. This is possible when competent human resources with proper attitude, skills and knowledge have been selected on merit so that human resources can work with motivation towards organizational growth (Healy, Pekarek, & Vromen, 2020; McKeown, & Cochrane, 2017; Meijerink, & Keegan, 2019). Success in today's competitive market depends on

advantages associated with economies of scale, proper use of technology, access to capital, creativity and innovation.

Good HRM has a tremendous effect on employees' Job Satisfaction. Many empirical studies (Kurdi, Alshurideh, & Alnaser, 2020; Lan, Chang, Ma, Zhang, & Chuang, 2019; Luu, & Phan, 2020; Nguyen, Ha, & Dang, 2020; Pradhan, Dash, & Jena, 2017) found that HRM has enormous effects on these practices. More precisely, Edgar and Geare, (2005), in their research conducted in New Zealand, found that Human Resource practices have a significant positive relationship with Job Satisfaction, Organizational Fairness. Consistently Absar, Mir & Azim, Mohammad & Balasundaram, Nimalathasan & Akhter, Sadia. (2010), also discovered that HR practices are directly correlated with the same. According to Lamba and Choudhary (2013) HRM practices provide an edge to employees' commitment towards an organization's goal in the global competitive market. The study concluded that HRM practices significantly impact and are associated with superior organizational performance, which helps retain skilled and knowledgeable employees. When the HR practices are in place to provide the necessary resources, their presence helps to reduce physical discomforts and increase both well-being and productivity (Lan, Chang, Ma, Zhang, & Chuang, 2019; Luu, & Phan, 2020; Nguyen, Ha, & Dang, 2020). In addition, Islam, Bangish, Muhammad, and Jehan (2016) stated that the best HR practices significantly and positively affect employee satisfaction in Pakistan.

Due to the importance of HRM and its impact on the organisation's development in this era of globalization, it has become necessary, if not essential, to know the factors that affect HRM and its impact on the Performance of Organizations, Job Satisfaction and Employees. Studies suggest that there are many pivotal predictors of good Human Resource practices, such as Organizational Learning Culture (OLC). More precisely,

studies (Al-Duhouri, Alshurideh, Al Kurdi, & Salloum, (2020), Lan, Chang, Ma, Zhang, & Chuang, 2019; Luu, & Phan, 2020; Nguyen, Ha, & Dang, 2020; Islam et. al., 2013; Duggan, Sherman, Carbery, & McDonnell, 2020) asserted that for good Human Resource practices that would lead to Employees Job Satisfaction to be realized, there must be antecedent factors that must be fulfilled such as Organizational Learning Culture (OLC) and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX).

Consistently, there is a consensus among researchers, economists, and business forecasters that the overall economy's growth could be achieved when the environment is a conducive and creative knowledge-based organization, occupation and the service sector are established. According to Joo (2010), knowledge workers are High-Level Employees who apply theoretical and analytical knowledge acquired through formal education in developing new products or services. Such experienced workers are equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge and information to imbue the services and performances, enhancing their organization's development and employee job satisfaction. Individuals with low levels of job satisfaction are always ready to switch jobs at the first opportunity (Duggan, Sherman, Carbery, & McDonnell, 2020). Therefore, organizations have focused on enhancing employee commitment through Learning Culture and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) to retain knowledgeable workers. One aspect of a better work environment designed to enhance effective Human Resource practices, Employee Commitment to job satisfaction is a Learning Culture (Luu, & Phan, 2020), which has not drawn much attention from researchers in the past, especially in Arab nations. An organization that promotes a learning culture is defined as "An Organization skilled at Creating, Acquiring, and Transferring Knowledge and in modifying its behaviour to reflect Accurate Knowledge and Insights" (Garvin, 1993, p. 80). Similarly, Luu and Phan (2020) concluded that organizations with a learning

culture attract knowledgeable individuals, support innovation, and reduce workers' intention to leave the organization.

Furthermore, Graen and his colleagues pioneered the Theory of Leader-Member Exchange 1970s of last century. The theory focuses on the social exchange between leader and member (Healy, Pekarek, & Vromen, 2020; McKeown, & Cochrane, 2017; Meijerink, & Keegan, 2019). The theory emphasizes the importance of a smooth relationship between leaders and subordinates (Chumpon Rodjam, et. al 2020; Hamid Masud & Wan Norhayate Wan Daud, 2019). According to Jelena Bozovic, Ivan Bozovic, and Isidora Ljumovic (2019) Leader-Member quality regulate the interchanged social, mental and psychic support between the leader and their subordinate. In such relations, subordinates interact with their supervisors frequently to obtain experience, confidence, encouragement and consent to accomplish work-group outcomes beyond the contractual prospects (Tews, Noe, Scheurer, Michel, (2016). Amazingly, in their empirical study, Islam et al. (2013) found that both Organizational Learning Culture (OLC) and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) were statistically and positively correlated with efficient human resource practices and employees' job satisfaction. Additionally, and in accordance with theoretical underpinning, Islam et al. (2013) also found the covariance between OLC and LMX. The analysis indicated that both factors were statistically and positively correlated ($r = .58, p = .001$).

Organizational Learning Culture and Leader-Member Exchange are crucial factors for efficient human resource practices (Cerasoli, Alliger, Donsbach, Mathieu, Tannenbaum, & Orvis, 2018; Tariq, Mumtaz, Mushtaq Ahmad & Waheed, 2014; Morris, Alvarez, Barney, Molloy, 2017) and employees job satisfaction (Malik, Wan, Ahmad, Naseem, Rehman, 2015; Chumpon Rodjam, 2020; Hamid Masud & Wan Norhayate Wan Daud, 2019; Jehanzeb, Khawaja; Mohanty, Jagannath, 2018). To

survive an organization in this competitive and globalised era, it must adapt the organizational learning culture of creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge and modify its behaviour to reflect proper knowledge, insight and Leader-Member Exchange strategy (Islam, et al., 2013). A good workplace with better organizational culture and human resource practices leads to produce higher-quality products, supports more innovation, possesses the ability to attract more talented people and experiences less resistance to change and lower turnover costs, all of which results directly in a better bottom line (Telford, Fletcher, Bedwell, 2017; Parker, 2017; Noe, 2017).

Organizational Learning Culture is an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, transferring knowledge, and modifying its behaviour to reflect appropriate knowledge and insight (Morris, Alvarez, Barney, Molloy, 2017; Delery, Roumpi, 2017). Healy, Pekarek and Vromen (2020) identified seven action imperatives for a learning organization; these actions are: (1) Create continuous learning opportunities, (2) Promote inquiry and dialogue, (3) Encourage collaboration and team learning, (4) Establish a system to capture and share learning, (5) empower people to have a collective vision, (6) Connect the organization to the environment, and finally (7) use leaders who model and support learning at an individual, team and organization levels.

According to Joo and Lim (2010), employees would be able to perceive the availability of Organizational Learning Culture such as continuous learning, dialogue and inquiry, team learning, established system, empowerment, system connection, and strategic leadership in their organization, high-up attachment to their organization commits to its ultimate goal and objective.

Furthermore, Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) has been defined as the quality of the exchange relationship that develops between employees and supervisors. Leader-Member Exchange has been considered an emotional attachment that fosters

performance and lessens absenteeism and turnover (Afsar, & Badir, 2016; Anand, Vidyarthi, & Rolnicki, 2018; Mejia, Wang, & Zhao, 2020; Martin, Guillaume, Thomas, Lee, & Epitropaki, 2016; Rurkkhum, 2018). Anand, Vidyarthi, and Rolnicki (2018) also found in the literature review that for employees to have a sense of belongingness, satisfaction and high turnover, their physical and psychological well-being must be the priority of their employers. Therefore, the relationship between LMX and affective satisfaction has important implications for employees, particularly as well as their organizations at large.

Interestingly, Wayne, et al. (2012) also found in their meta-analysis of 23 empirical studies that LMX positively and statistically predicted organizational productivity. However, according to Bowler, Paul and Halbesleben (2017) and Martin, Guillaume, Thomas, Lee, & Epitropaki (2016) this meta-analysis failed to report large unexplained variation in its strength. This unexplained variation may be related to the interpretation by employees of the quality of their LMX relationship as an indication of their exchange relationship with the organization. Furthermore, according to Chan, Chok, Lae, Lam, and Lee, (2017); Afsar and Badir (2016); Mejia, Wang and Zhao (2020); Lai, Chow, and Loi (2018), Cordial relationship between superiors and subordinates, lower employees' turnover the higher degree of trust.

Consistent with previous findings, Bowler, Paul, and Halbesleben (2017) suggested that supervisors offer high LMX (in-group) Employees special benefits such as a higher degree of trust, respect, mutual obligation and interaction, participation, support, and rewards, which are not offered to low LMX (out-group) Employees. Employees who experienced high LMX reciprocate with a more significant expenditure of time and effort and higher levels of satisfaction and performance.

Therefore, due to the tremendous effect of Organizational Learning Culture (OLC) and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) on human resource practices and, consequently, its effect on employees' job satisfaction, the research attempts to investigate the model among the Omani population. In other words, the study examines the effects of OLC and LMX on human resource practices in Oman and its consequences on Omani Employees' job satisfaction.

1.2 Background of the study

The ultimate goal of this empirical study is to investigate the relationship between Leader-Member Exchange and Organization Learning Culture with Job Satisfaction. It also attempts to study the role of Human Resource Management Practices in mediating between LMX and OLC on the one hand and employees' job satisfaction in Omani s Public Sector. Since the beginning of the Renaissance in the Sultanate of Oman in the 70s, led by Sultan Qaboos, the concept of government organizations was poorly designed and weakly implemented. Therefore, this government organization was started badly from scratch and suffered from mismanagement, and poor management of available resources, which eventually affected the services, especially in human resources management. During that time, foreign experts of different specializations were brought to the country to assist local employees. Consequently, since the beginning of 1970, human resources management has become one of the most critical priorities of the government's attention; where there is no speech to the Sultan Qaboos (the previous Sultan of Oman) without any recommendations to guide the importance of national human resources, to be developed and refinement commensurate with the technological boom and contemporary scientific (Ministry of Civil Service, 2015).

Accordingly, at the beginning of 1970, public sector organizations were given autonomy in recruitment, while these organizations were fully responsible for hiring and managing their employees until the process became centralized by the Ministry of Civil Services, which is the governmental body in the Sultanate of Oman responsible for all matters relating to government employees under the civil service system. The process of putting human resources management under the ministry in Oman was to get rid of cronyism and corruption and manage electronically under the responsibilities of the Ministry of Civil Service according to civil Service Law (Ministry of civil service, 2010).

Thus, the Ministry of Civil Service in the Sultanate of Oman is the essential government organization that deals with recruiting, human resources development and employee promotions. The Ministry of Civil Service was an established institute to develop human resources in the public sector named the Institute of public administration. The human resource departments in various organizations play a pivotal role in recruiting new employees and providing adequate training, administrative follow-up of employees' performance, improvement and development, evaluating their performance and ensuring the quality of the different services provided by every government organization. Hence, government organizations increase their efforts to enhance their employee's feeling of job satisfaction and provide the necessary help the employees need to achieve the organization's vision and objectives. (The General administrative institute, 2012)

His majesty, the late Qaboos bin saeid, former Sultan of the Sultanate of Oman, unequivocally asserted that human development would be one of must focused issues in the Sultanate of Oman:" We have confirmed our continued interest in the development of human resources, and we mentioned it a top priority in our plans and

our programs. Human resources are the cornerstone of every building development and are a pole mill around which all kinds of development and all its purpose would be realized. The young people are the present and future of the nation. Therefore they should be given every opportunity, attention and care to realize their dream and achieve their ultimate goals, such as opportunities for education, training and rehabilitation and employment". (Ministry of Civil Service website, www.mocs.gov.om)

In 1996, the decision to seek greater economic integration was incorporated into a long-term strategy called "Oman 2020" which was believed would be led to an effective human resource management system. The vision was to create leadership opportunities for Omanis in the public sector and provide them with training and qualifications to keep pace with the requirements of each organization, leading to an increase in the efficiency of the Omani citizen in leading government organizations (Ministry of National Economy, 2007). Consequently, some qualified leaders from the governmental organization were instructed to implement the newest technological systems to improve the organization's learning culture and to adapt to the modern systems used in other developed countries. Several development dimensions have been proposed to transform the organizational learning culture of government organizations to a new stage that aligns with the technological and scientific booming via reshaping the government's role in appointing competent leaders to senior leadership positions, initiating strategies for human resource development and upgrading the skills of the Omani workforce. It also aimed to focus on leadership skills development for senior positions and spread strategic views among various government organizations.

Development of the public sector was inseparable from national development as the need for services expanded and led to an increase in the recruitment of Omani nationals in various government departments. In 2007, Oman achieved the highest rate

of employment of national manpower in public service in the GCC at 85.5%. The Sultanate is on course to achieve 95% by 2020 (Ministry of National Economy, 2007).

This chapter provides an essential background to the comprehensive thesis. The researcher believes that there are many problems in the human resource management system in the government organizations in the Sultanate of Oman which significantly and continuously affect the job satisfaction of public sector employees. This problem includes the organization's learning culture, leader-member exchange and human resource practices. This chapter consists of the Introduction, Background, Problem statement, Research questions, Research objectives, Research significance, Scope of the study, and Conceptual definition.

1.3 Research Problem

Human resource practices have been among the most debated topics in social organizations, whether public or private sectors. Human resource practices are major determinants of employees' satisfaction, motivation, productivity and organizational performance. However, according to Baek-Kyoo and Ji Hyun (2010), although some researchers are devoted to investigating Human Resources practices, Organizational Learning Culture and job satisfaction separately, there is a scarcity of studies to investigate these variables simultaneously reflect the dynamics of organizations. More precisely, there is no scarcity of empirical research, particularly in Arab nations and especially in Oman, devoted to studying the influences of Organizational Learning Culture and Leader-Member Exchange on Human Resource practices and its consequence on employees' Job Satisfaction.

Additionally, little available research on Organizational Learning Culture and Leader-Member Exchange was conducted in private sectors. Hence, it is firmly

believed, less empirically tested, that Organizational Learning Culture and Leader-Member Exchange, Human Resource practices, and Job Satisfaction are crucial, if not essential, for Public Sectors and Non-Profit Organizations. It is hypothesized that the uniqueness of the work environment has an enormous effect on these pivotal variables.

Furthermore, despite many efforts in Oman to improve employees' Job Satisfaction, public governmental organizations are still facing many challenges. According to past studies, some of these challenges are lack of vision, lack of Organizational Learning Culture and Leader-Member Exchange that consequently led to a lack of employee satisfaction and performance. Based on the Directorate General of Information and Statistics report in the Ministry of Civil Service dated September 2018; the researcher discovered huge numbers of employee resignations from 01/01/2015 to 30/06/2018. The total of Omanis employees resignations was 13222, which partially reflects the quality of services provided by various government organizations in general and caused customers dissatisfaction against the performance of the government organizations and the services they provide. Consistent with this report, in their empirical study, Swailes and Al Fahdi (2011) found that the main reasons for employee turnover are dissatisfaction with management style, promotion opportunities and compensation practices.

Due to the significance of targeted variables (Organizational Learning Culture, Leader-Member Exchange, Human Resource practices, employees' satisfaction) in organisational development and effectiveness of leadership, the researcher aims to investigate the effects of an organizational learning culture (OLC) and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) on Human Resource practices and its consequences on employees' satisfactions in the different government organization in Sultanate of Oman. Thus, the study attempted to examine the effects of OLC and LMX on employees' Job Satisfaction

when HRM practices are considered a mediator variable in the public sector in the sultanate of Oman.

1.4 Research Questions

The primary purpose of this study is to address elements of the impact of Organizational Learning Culture and Leader-Member Exchange on Human Resource practices and its consequent effects on Employees Job Satisfaction to develop a model for HR practices that affect organizational performance. The primary research is: What are the relative and combined effects of OLC and LMX on Human Resource practices and, subsequently, on Job Satisfaction? Specifically, the study attempts to address the following research questions:

1. Does Organizational Learning Culture impact Human Resource Management among the public sector employees in Sultanate Oman?
2. Does Leader-Member Exchange impact Human Resource Management among the public sector employees in Sultanate Oman?
3. Do Human Resource Management practices impact Job satisfaction among the public sector employees in Sultanate Oman?
4. Do human resource management practices play a significant role in mediating between Organizational Learning Culture (OLC) and Member Exchange (LMX) on Job Satisfaction (J Sati) among Omani public sector employees on the other hand?
5. Is there any significant direct effect of Organizational Learning Culture (OLC) and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) on Job Satisfaction among Omani public employees when HRM is implemented as a mediator?

1.5 Research Objectives

This study examines the influence of Leader-Member Exchange and Organizational Learning Culture on Human Resource Management practices. This study also investigates the impact of HRM practices on Job Satisfaction in the context of the public sector in the Sultanate of Oman. To achieve these aims, below are the objectives of this study:

1. To investigate the impact of Organization Learning Culture on Human Resource Management Practices among public sectors in Oman.
2. To examine the impact of Leader-Member Exchange on Human Resource Management practices among public sector employees in Oman.
3. To study the impact of Human Resource Management Practices on Job satisfaction among public sector employees in Oman.
4. To investigate the role of human resource practices in mediating between Organization Learning Culture and Leader-Member Exchange on the one hand and job satisfaction among Omani public sector employees on the other hand.
5. To examine the significant direct effect of Organizational Learning Culture (OLC) and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) on Job Satisfaction (J Sati) among Omani public employees when HRM implemented as a mediator.

1.6 The Significant of the Study

This study has both theoretical and practical significance for Human Resource Development. First, this research investigated Human Resource practice and its implications for job satisfaction. It also highlighted the tremendous effects of Organizational Learning Culture (OLC) and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) on

Human Resource practices in Omani public sectors. Insight into effective Human Resource practices' potential influence on Employee Job Satisfaction has many crucial practical and research implications and benefits. Despite recent advancements in research studies in Human Resource Management, no available studies have explored these significant elements in Oman simultaneously.

Moreover, this study has an Integrative Approach. The current research considers various relationships, such as Organizational Learning Culture (OLC), Leader-Member Exchange (LMX), Human Resource practices and Employees Job Satisfaction. Previous research has investigated the direct linkage between OLC or LMX and Employees' Job Satisfaction separately. However, combinations of these variables together and exploring them simultaneously would be considered a major significance of this study. The current research can provide a greater understanding of Human Resource practices by identifying the practices that may influence employees' job satisfaction. The study would also test the suggested model and examine its appropriateness, for which other future studies might be replicated.

Furthermore, the results of this study are therefore of value, especially if it considers the unavailability of a study focused on holistic Human Resource practices in Oman. As indicated earlier, the Omani government has spent a huge amount of money to design plans and Human Resource practices that can enhance the Performance of Leaders, Job Satisfaction of Followers and there as Organizational processes; however, little is known about the effect of this program. In other words, although the Omani Government is trying to promote the standard of service delivery across the public administration, the services are still below International Standards. Thus, highlighting and investigating the effects of Human Resource practices and their impact on Job Satisfaction would remedy many public sector administration problems, positively

enhancing the quality of their outcomes. Furthermore, by investigating this problem, administrators and policymakers will gain insights into the crises in Human Resource practices and know how to enhance and improve the standard of their performance. The study also contributes to the body of knowledge by pooling findings from previous works on Human Resource practices, identifying their problems and providing recommendations. It also helps further augment public sector management and delivery practices, which is tantamount to helping these institutions better prepare themselves for the era of globalization and competitiveness. This study is therefore designed to act as an avenue for further research and provide corporations with a better way of dealing with Human Resources.

This study also provides an essential understanding of the factors that influence Human Resource Management practices in Non-Profit Organizations known as the Public Sector in the Sultanate of Oman. Specifically, this study provides empirical evidence on the effect Leader-Member Exchange and Organizational Learning Culture on Human Resource Management practices and their impact on Job Satisfaction when HRM is a Mediator between them and the Public Sector in the sultanate of Oman. Even though previous studies have justified the link between Leader-Member Exchange and Human Resource Management practices, such a relationship has been tested among employees of profit-oriented organisations in Western countries [Karin, Matthijs, Nicole, Sandra, & Claudia, (2010)].

Finally, this study is significant because it provides cross-validation toward the association between Human Resource Management practices and Job Satisfaction in the public sector in Arabic (Sultanate of Oman). Previous studies that provide empirical evidence on the association between HRM practices and Job Satisfaction have been conducted Profit Oriented Contexts such as manufacturing organizations (Eunice, 2014)

and service industry (Guchait & Cho, 2010) and in non-Arabic contexts such as the United Kingdom (Petrescu, Simmons & Bradley, 2004), the United States of America (Byrne, Miller & Pitts, 2009).

1.7 The scope of the study

This study combined two important constructs; first, the study examines the effect of Human Resource Management practices on public sector employees in the Sultanate of Oman. Specifically, the study examines the effect of HRM practices on Job Satisfaction—second, antecedents or determinants of HRM practices in the public sector in the Sultanate of Oman. More precisely, the study investigated the effects of Organizational Learning Culture (OLC) and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) on Human Resource Management practices and mediator variables and the direct relationship between OLC and LMX on Job Satisfaction.

Conceptual Underpinning of the Study

The conceptual Underpinning of this study consisted of four constructs. The first of these constructs is Organizational Learning Culture. The second construct is Leader-Member Exchange. These two constructs are Exogenous Variables, while the third, Job Satisfaction, is Endogenous Variable. Moreover, Human Resource practices consist of four dimensions: compensation and Rewards, Training, Career Development Opportunities and Work-Life Balance. This factor is considered a Mediator Variable. Thus, Organizational Learning Culture (OLC) and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) in this proposed model are independent variables, while employees' Job Satisfaction is hypothesized as Dependent Variable. Finally, the Human Resource practices construct is hypothesized as Mediator Variable.

1.8 The Conceptual Definition

Organizational Learning Culture (OLC): Organizational Learning Culture is an organizational phenomenon that supports the acquisition of information, the distribution and sharing of learning, that reinforce and support continuous learning and application to organization improvement (Jones, 2009; Hsu, 2009).

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX): Leader-Member Exchange is defined as the quality of the exchange relationship between an employee and his or her supervisor (Teng, et al., 2020).

Human Resource Management (HRM) practices: refers to activities in the organization related to people management. The activities include compensation and welfare, training and development, recruitment and selection, performance appraisal and rewards (Ahmed, 2017).

Job Satisfaction: Job Satisfaction is defined as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience (Silic,2020).

1.9 This research consists of five chapters, as detailed below.

Chapter one contains the overall background of the study, which consists of a statement of the problem, research questions, research objectives, significance of study and scope of the study and the definitions of the terms. Finally, the chapter defines the conceptual definition of each variable included in the study.

Chapter two describes the literature related to this study. In this chapter two, the researcher reviewed previous studies on the four constructs of this study, both theoretically and empirically. The chapter reviewed the concept of job satisfaction, human Resource Management (HRM) and its practices (compensation and rewards,

training, career development and life-work balance). Finally, the chapter briefly describes the research framework of this study.

Chapter three explains the methodological aspect of this study, such as research design, population and sample, data collection method and procedure, measure and data analysis technique and procedure.

Chapter four presented the results of data analysis, such as confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling. The chapter thoroughly presented these analyses and the results.

Chapter five discussed the findings of the study in light of previous studies. Moreover, it addressed the research recommendations and the practical and theoretical implications of the research and provided limitations and suggestions for future studies.

1.10 Conclusion

Chapter one presents the overall background of this research. This broad background consists of the introduction, the problem's research statement and the study's theoretical underpinning. In addition, this chapter also highlighted the research questions and objectives and the significance of the study. Also, chapter a presented the scope of the study and the research variables definition. Chapter two will review the literature on the constructs of this study comprehensively definition.